

**City of Northampton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

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*In City Council*

March 3, 2016

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Upon recommendation of the Mayor

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**16.032**

**An Order**

**To Give Authorization for Two Separate Inter-Municipal Agreements:**  
**Williamsburg and West Springfield**

*Ordered, that*

Whereas MGL C.40 s. 4A allows for joint operation of public activities among governmental units, and

Whereas, MGL c. 40, s. 4A requires that such inter-governmental agreements be approved, in a city, by the City Council and the Mayor, and;

Whereas the City of Northampton provides services to and shares services with other municipalities;

Therefore pursuant to MGL C. 40 s. 4A the City Council hereby authorizes the City of Northampton to enter into the following inter-municipal agreements:

Contract with Town of Williamsburg for a new public access pedestrian trail that will cross City of Northampton property to provide a new public access trail to the historic Williamsburg Reservoir Dam per the agreement.

Contract with City of West Springfield to provide the use of a GMC Activity Bus for the West Springfield varsity baseball team for transportation to a tournament March 25, 2016 – March 28, 2016 per the agreement.



*Town of Williamsburg  
Board of Selectmen  
141 Main Street, P.O. Box 447  
Haydenville, Massachusetts 01039-0447*

December 10, 2015

Mayor David J. Narkewicz  
City of Northampton  
210 Main St #12,  
Northampton, MA 01060

Dear Mayor Narkewicz:

We write today to request permission for a new public-access pedestrian trail in Williamsburg that is proposed to cross City of Northampton property off of Ashfield Road and Judd Lane. This new trail will provide public trail access to the historic Williamsburg Reservoir Dam, an historic site that in 1874 had a fundamental impact on the history of both our communities.

As you may know, the 1874 Mill River Flood was the largest industrial disaster of its day, and changed the course of both Williamsburg's and Northampton's history forever, wiping out five mill villages and killing 139 people. The story of the flood is a formative story in our communities' history; unfortunately, access to the Williamsburg Reservoir Dam site, which tells so much of that story, has been off limits to the general public due to private property concerns.

Since 2014, our town's Williamsburg Woodland Trails Committee has been working with local private landowners Bethany and Will Ouimet and the City of Northampton Water Department (which owns the dam site) to develop a trail proposal that will allow the public to access, explore and experience the dam site, the historic flood story and the history of farm and forest management in the hilltowns.

By this letter we are submitting a formal proposal and request for permission (through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)) to develop a public access trail on City of Northampton property that will allow the residents of both our communities to experience the stories of this important site.

Attached you will find a full trail proposal and proposed MOU between the City of Northampton and Town of Williamsburg.

We hope you will look favorably on this proposed project, and we invite you, your staff and your family to come experience the trail.

Yours sincerely,





David E. Mathers  
Williamsburg Board of Selectmen Chair

cc: Nicole Sanford  
Williamsburg Woodland Trail Committee

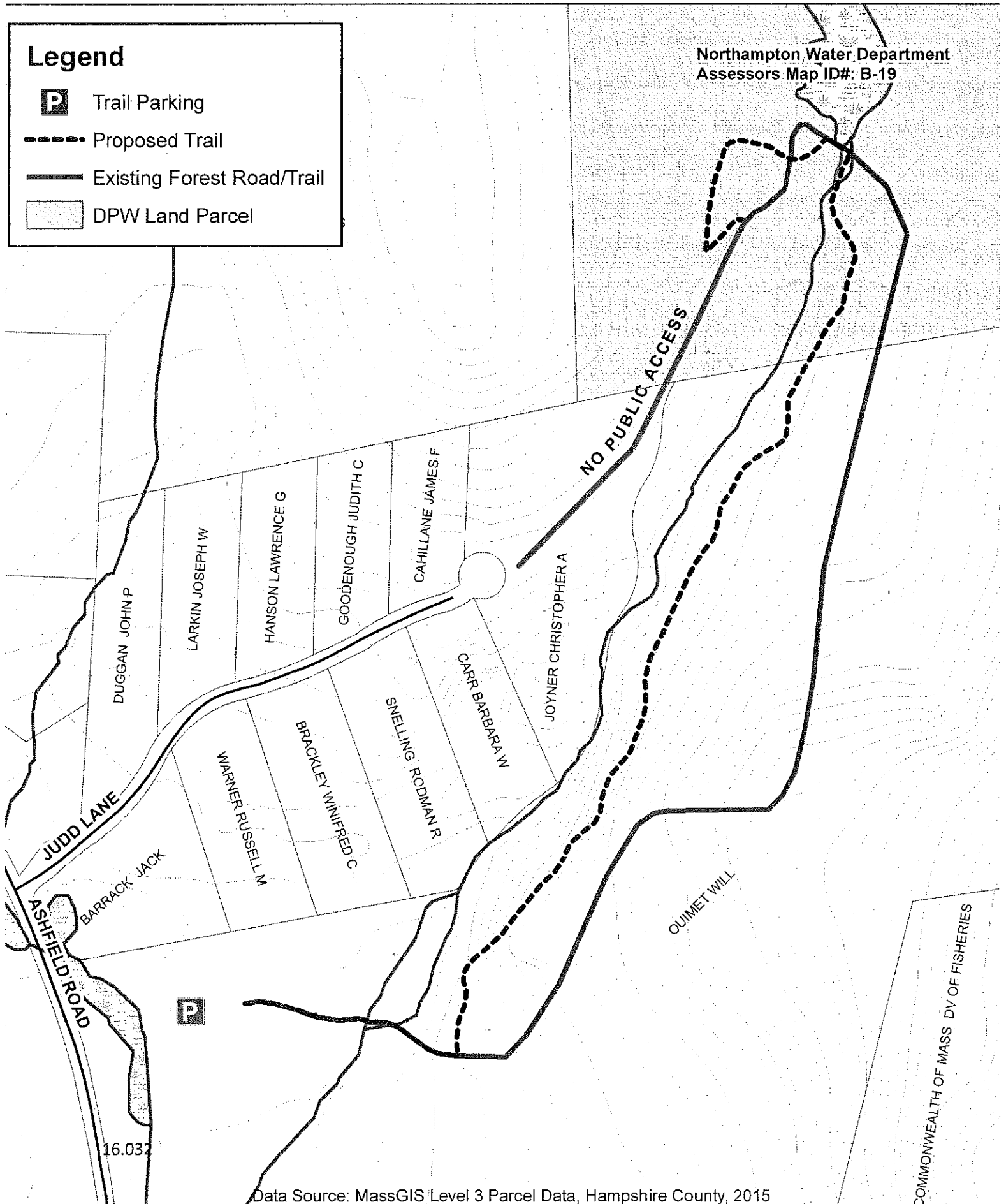


# Attachment A: Complete Trail With Parcel Data

## Legend

-  Trail Parking
-  Proposed Trail
-  Existing Forest Road/Trail
-  DPW Land Parcel

Northampton Water Department  
Assessors Map ID#: B-19



Memorandum of Understanding  
Between the Town of Williamsburg ("Town") and the City of Northampton ("City")  
Regarding the Historic Flood and Forest Trail on Northampton Water Department Property

The City of Northampton, through its Department of Public Works, owns and manages land in the Town of Williamsburg that contains the remnants of the historic Mill River Dam and Reservoir (Williamsburg Assessors Map and Lot B-19, Attachment A).

The City of Northampton actively manages this land for the purpose of water quality and reserves the property for future water supply needs. The City periodically implements silvicultural techniques, including but not limited to, timber harvests for these purposes.

The site of the Mill River Dam and Reservoir site contains historic structures and artifacts that help to illustrate the story of the events leading up to and including May 16, 1874, the day of the Mill River Disaster.

The events of May 16, 1874, changed the course of Williamsburg's and Northampton's history forever. The disaster was the worst industrial disaster of its day, it contributed to a new movement in industrial safety regulation and it has shaped the cultural history, family narratives and economic development of Williamsburg to this day.

The Town and City therefore agree that:

The City will allow for the construction and public use of a pedestrian, public-access trail (as proposed in Attachment A) on and across City property.

To the extent that the law allows, the trail shall not be advertised outside of the Town and listed on any regional or statewide maps of recreational trails.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 21, Section 17C, recreational use statute, the City of Northampton and the Town of Williamsburg "shall not be liable for personal injuries or property damage sustained by such members of the public, including without limitation a minor, while on said land in the absence of willful, wanton, or reckless conduct."

The Town agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the City for any claim arising from the use of the trail.

The Town, through its Williamsburg Woodland Trails (WWT) Committee, will build, monitor and maintain the trail as proposed, or as revised with approval of the City; including the proposed wood stringer pedestrian bridge. Trail accessibility, compliance with bid laws and prevailing wage laws will be the responsibility of the Town.

No motorized vehicles shall be allowed on said trail or property, except by separate agreement between the City and any individual, club or organization.

Dogs and other animals will not be allowed on the trail with the exception of service animals.

Trail users shall not engage in any activities that could harm the natural or cultural resources of the site or impair water quality. Such activities include but are not limited to littering, dumping, fires, illegal trail building, camping, entering streams, moving stones, or altering historic structures.

The WWT Committee will work with the City to develop and display information that describes the history of the site and the value of active forest management on City lands. Final text and signage locations shall be approved by City staff.


The WWT will close the trail to the public temporarily, as may be required by the City during forest harvesting operations.

No structures will be built or sited in a way that interferes with City management of the property.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Town and City have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized officers as of the dates noted below.

Town of Williamsburg

City of Northampton

  
Name: David E. Mathers  
Title: Chair, Board of Selectmen

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Name: David J. Narkewicz  
Title: Mayor

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Name: Joseph M. Cook  
Title: Chief Procurement Officer

February 4, 2016  
Date

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Date

